



Branson Briefs

A monthly e-Newsletter for the community providing information about upcoming activities, projects and events in the city of Branson

Volume I, Issue 7

City of Branson
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417-334-3345
417-334-6095 fax
www.bransonmo.gov

Hours
8-a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Mayor
Raeanne Presley

Board of Aldermen
Stan Barker
Cris Bohinc
Rick Davis
Stephen Marshall
Bob Simmons
Sandra Williams

City Administrator
Dean Kruithof

**Board of Aldermen
meeting schedule**
2nd & 4th Tuesday
of each month
7 p.m.
Council Chambers
City Hall

**Next Branson Citizens
Academy will begin
Thursday evening
September 14.
Sign up now!**

City sales tax still up, Tourism tax down

Branson's sales tax revenue for May was down 2.4% compared to May 2008. However, for the fiscal year October through September, the tax revenue is up 1.5% over 2008. City officials continue to watch this year's budget, and they say it's going to be a tough budget year in 2010.

Because of the tax increment financing at Branson Hills and Branson Landing, city officials look at both the gross and net sales tax available to the city. While Branson is up 1.5% for the fiscal year, after removing bond payments for both Branson Landing and Branson Hills, the net sales tax revenue available for everyday operations is down about \$175,000.

The city's tourism tax on attractions, lodging and restaurants was down 11.8% in May compared to May 2008. For the fiscal year, the tourism tax is down 5.6 percent.



Branson a safe place to live and visit



Based on the latest crime reports from the Branson Police Department, residents and visitors can feel safe in our city. Through June, the latest statistics available, there have been no murders or rapes in Branson, and assaults are down 11%, from 118 in 2008 to 105 so far this year. Stealing and property damage crimes have also decreased this year.

Fall Creek extension stays on schedule

In September, Fall Creek Road north of Highway 76 will be open to traffic and provide another major north /south thoroughfare through Branson. When completed, the three lane road will extend north of Highway 76 and connect to Epps Rd at Roark Valley Rd. The new Fall Creek Rd will allow motorists to travel from Highway 248 all the way south to MO Highway 165 by the Fall Creek Steakhouse. Highway 165 continues to Table Rock Dam.

The Fall Creek Road construction also features a new way of erosion prevention that is more aesthetic. The contractor has started installing modular retaining walls to stabilize the rock outcroppings on the north end of the project by Roark Valley. The wall system is new to the Branson area, and when completed will have a front face made completely of soil. There will be no exposed concrete blocks. The wall will result in a green vegetated surface that looks more attractive plus provides the needed reinforcement for the unstable rock.



Modular retaining wall

Water use up July 4 weekend

If the amount of water the city produced over the July 4 weekend is any indication, a whole lot of visitors were in town for the summer holiday. The city's two water treatment plants released 17 million gallons during the three day weekend compared to 14.5 million gallons in 2008. That's an increase of 14.3%, and the second highest 4th of July holiday for water production. The record was 2006.

**Internet auction of city surplus property will be held on Tuesday, August 11
Go to www.purplewave.com**

Citizens' Service Request Line

If you need a question answered about the city, or need to report a problem or express a concern, contact the Citizens' Service Request line at 337-8502. The line is open 24/7 and the city will respond to your request within five working days.

You can also e-mail a request from the city of Branson website www.bransonmo.gov.

In 2008, the city received and responded to 179 citizen requests.

The city is exploring the feasibility of providing curbside recycling for residents. Officials are meeting with solid waste companies on how they might implement curbside recycling.

Branson Public Schools open Thursday August 20

Watch those illegal temporary signs

City officials are seeing an increase in the number of illegal temporary signs around town and want to remind residents and businesses that there are city codes regulating the placement of these types of signs.

Under the city's sign ordinance, no private or business signs are allowed on any public right-of-way including city street, directional or stop signs, and no signs are allowed on utility power poles.

Any temporary sign not anchored in the ground, like a sandwich board sign, is unlawful on commercial or residential private property.



Temporary signs staked in the ground or banners do require a permit from the city's planning and development department. However, on-premise commercial and residential real estate "For Sale" signs do not require a permit if sized and staked as per the sign code. Residential garage sale permits obtained through the city's finance department allow garage sale signs without a permit; however, they may be staked only on residential private property and may not be placed on any right-of-way property, utility poles or signs.

City beginning neighborhood meetings Aug 13

Branson officials are beginning a process of very detailed neighborhood action plans. These plans will identify attributes as well as needs for the various residential neighborhoods in the city, and outline how neighborhoods and the city can work together to preserve and enhance some of the more established neighborhoods.

The first neighborhood meeting is **Thursday, August 13 with residents of Hiawatha Heights and Cliff Drive. The time is 5-7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 400 S. Sunshine.** Residents can express their views to the Board of Aldermen and city staff. Other meetings in other residential areas will follow.



Utility study underway

The city has contracted with HDR Engineering of Kansas City for a water and wastewater rate study. Branson has not undertaken a complete, detailed rate utility study for several years. The study will be in two phases. Phase 1 will provide information needed to establish appropriate water and sewer rates to sustain these utilities. Phase 2 includes a multi-year financial plan to match capital projects to specific funding, a comparison of Branson's water and sewer charges with other cities and a capacity fee study that will determine appropriate charges to support costs of new development and system expansion.



Firefighters purchase new cameras

The Branson Fire Department has added three new thermal imaging cameras to its life saving equipment. These cameras allow firefighters to quickly locate victims inside a smoke filled building. They also can determine the level of heat inside a room or building before firefighters enter. The cameras replace existing, older ones that will be reserves. Each of the city's three fire stations has thermal imaging cameras.

Fire department receives tractor/trailer donation

Will Fischer Distributing Company in Springfield has donated a used, but in good condition, tractor/trailer unit to the Branson Fire Department.

The department plans to use the truck for towing its training tower and fire safety house to various locations.

The trailer will store important communication and life-safety equipment that can be hauled to the scenes of long-term major emergency situations.





Branson Citizens Academy

Sign up now to participate in the next Branson Citizens Academy that begins Thursday evening, September 17. The eight session program gives citizens experiences with all facets of city government. Contact Jerry Adams at 337-8526 or e-mail jadams@bransonmo.gov.



City employees to participate in Caring Day

Nineteen city of Branson employees will be joining some 200 volunteers from businesses throughout the Tri-lakes Area to participate in the 12th annual Community Caring Day Tuesday, August 18.

The volunteers are excused from their normal jobs to spend an entire day working on projects at area non-profit organizations, cities and schools. These are labor-intensive projects that might not otherwise get completed because of a lack of funding or manpower or both.

City employees will be spending the day at the Women's Crisis Center painting, repairing screens, laying tile and building a handicap ramp.

"You work hard on Community Caring Day, but you feel good about what you've accomplished," said Branson Fire Chief Carl Sparks, who is coordinating the city employees' participation in the event. "We have never had diffi-

culty in getting volunteers from our city for this worthwhile project, and many of these people volunteer year after year. We've been a part of Community Caring Day since it's beginning in 1998."

Meetings now streamed on the Web

The city is offering live audio streaming of the Board of Aldermen meetings on the Worldwide Web.. The stream will be in mp3 format and any mp3 player such as Windows Media Player should be able to receive the broadcast. To listen to the broadcast, visit the city's web page at <http://bransonmo.gov> and click on the "Listen Live" link located on the left side of the main page or the *Agendas & Minutes* section. The audio will be archived in the *Agendas & Minutes* section if citizens should miss the live broadcast or would like to replay it at a later date.



FEMA to visit Branson Landing August 14

Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Kansas City will conduct a Community Assistance Visit (CAV) to Branson on August 14. The visit is in response to a letter sent by city officials in early April asking for resolution of a flood plain controversy at Branson Landing. The city asked for a quick review of all the documentation sent to FEMA and for a FEMA visit to Branson Landing.

In March a former city employee alleged that city officials intentionally hid the flood risks of two Landing building basements to help the Landing's developer obtain a new map that put these buildings outside the flood plain.. The employee claimed the buildings, which house Waxy O'Shea's and the Hilton Promenade Hotel, are not flood proofed as required by FEMA.

The city's position is that the buildings were constructed on land that has never been in a flood plain before, during or after the Branson Landing development. The city has FEMA flood plain maps dating back to the mid 1990s that show this land outside any floodplain.

FEMA representatives will tour the basements in question and review city documents and maps regarding the Branson Landing floodplain. FEMA told city officials no decision will be made August 7, but their findings will be reviewed and a report issued in the future.



New hours at the Aquatic Center

With summer winding down and public schools starting this month, the Branson Aquatic Center has reduced its operating hours.

Starting August 3 and continuing to August 16, the hours will be noon to 6 p.m., seven days a week.

Starting August 17, the Aquatic Center will be open weekends only, noon to 6 p.m., through September 7 when it closes for the season.